Misuse of powers by field officers

2601. SHRI ABANI ROY: Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the Oil Corporation's field officers have been given vast powers under the RMDG and MDG;

(b) whether the same are oftenly misused by them and honest dealers are also harassed and penalty are imposed on the dealers without information even to dealers;

(c) what is the mode of appeal in case the penalties are imposed on dealers;

(d) whether the dealers are given opportunities to explain the charges framed against them; and

(e) how much period for the appeal is granted and the detail procedure for the same?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI SANTOSH KUMAR GANGWAR): (a) to (e) Oil companies had successively formulated Marketing Discipline Guidelines of 1982/1995 and the Revised Marketing Discipline Guidelines, 1998 for marketing of petroleum products by dealers/ distributors. According to the MDG, the field officers are required to inspect and monitor the dealerships/distributorships to ensure that customers get the correct quality and quantity of the product, etc. In case of any irregularities, the dealer's written explanation is sought and action is taken if the explanation is not found satisfcatory. As per MDG 1998, every punitive action would be taken after giving show cause notice of minimum 7 days. However, at present implementation of Marketing Disciplines Guidelines, 1995 and Revised Marketing Discipline guidelines, 1998 has been stayed by the Delhi High Court. Therefore, action against the erring dealers is being taken in accordance with dealership agreements.

Misuse of funds for poverty alleviation in KBK districts

2602. SHRI YERRA NARAYANASWAMY: (a) whether misuse of funds meant for poverty alleviation programmes caused starvation deaths in Kalahandi, Bolangir and Koraput districts of Orissa;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) the action proposed against large scale corruption in the implementation of programmes, schemes and projects in those districts; and

(d) the steps proposed to develop these districts at an early date to prevent such starvation deaths?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS, MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS AND MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PLANNING AND PROGRAMME IMPLEMENTATION (SHRI RAM NAIK): (a) to (c) The State Government have reported that a vigilance mechanism is in position in the Kalahandi, Bolangir and Koraput (KBK) districts, as in other districts for overseeing implementation of various poverty amelioration programmes. The guidelines of Government of India have been kept in view while setting up the vigilance mechanism. In addition, a vigilance Cell has been established at State Head Quarters under the charge of Additional Secretary in the Panchayati Raj Department.

(d) In order to focus on high priority schemes which would deal with the basic problems of the undivided districts Koraput, Bolangir and Kalahandi, the government of Orissa has prepared the Revised Long Term Action Plan (1998-99 to 2006-07) which comprises of Central Plan Schemes and Centrally Sponsored Schemes in various sectors, namely, agriculture, horticulture, watershed development, afforestation, irrigation, health, drinking water, emergency feeding, welfare of SCs/STs and rural connectivity.

In addition to the normal flow of funds under Central Plans and Centrally Sponsored Schemes, various steps have been taken to ensure some additional funding to these districts in 1998-99. These include doubling

of the first instalment of funds under Employment Assurance Scheme and provision of additionally of Rs. 37 crore in the Annual Plan 1998-99 of Orissa for these districts. Further Rs. 7 crore have been provided for Emergency Feeding Programme and Rs. 2 crore for Mobile Health Units under Basic Minimum Services.

Release of Central pool resources to North-Eastern States

2603. SHRI W. ANGOU SINGH: Will PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) the basis of distribution of the Prime Minister's package and 10 percent cut from the Central budget to the North-Eastern States;

(b) amount so far released to each State of North-East Region;

(c) whether Government have taken up to reflect it in the Ninth Five Year Plan; and

(d) if so, amount which allotted to each State?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS, MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS AND MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PLANNING AND PROGRAMME IMPLEMENTATION (SHRI RAM NAIK): (a) to (d) The then Prime Minister had visited the North Eastern States in October, 1996 and had made a statement at Guwahati on 27th October, 1996 in regard to New Initiatives for the North Eastern Region. This statement included, inter-alia, several projects to be implemented on priority and envisaged earmarking of 10% of the Budgets of Central Ministries/Departments for the North Eastern States.

A Non-lapsable Central Pool of Resources has since been constituted from out of unspent amount(s) from 10% of the Budgets of the various Central Ministries/Departments, which is to be utilized to assist development projects, including in the infrastructure sector, in the North East and Sikkim. Releases amounting to Rs. 93.10 crores have so far been made from the Non-lapsable Central Pool of Resources to the North Eastern States for implementation of Projects by the appropriate Central/State agencies through the State Plans.

Poverty Line in Punjab

2604. SHRI LAJPAT RAI: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) the percentage of Punjab's population which are living below the poverty line during 1997-98 and 1998-99;

(b) the figures for the preceding three years;

(c) the percentage of population living in Kuchcha houses and jhuggies;

(d) the average per capita annual income of people living below poverty line during the same period;

(e) the steps being taken to ameliorate the condition of the poor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS, MINIS- TER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS AND MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PLANNING AND PROGRAMME IMPLEMENTATION (SHRI RAM NAIK): (a) and (b) The Planning Commission estimates the percentage of persons living below poverty line from the quinquennial consumer expenditure survey conducted by the National Sample Survey Organisation (NSSO). The last such survey was conducted in 1993-94. As such, the estimates of percentage of people living below the poverty line in 1997-98 and 1998-99 and also for the preceding three years are not available. As per the latest estimates of percentage of persons living below the poverty line, based on the consumer expenditure survey data of 50th Round of NSSO, 11.77 per cent of the population in Punjab lived below the poverty line in 1993-94.

(c)The NSSO in its 50th Round (July, 1993 to June, 1994) has collected data on number of households living in kucha houses i.e., the